



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Atlantic Coastal States Schedule Horseshoe Crab Public Meetings** *Addendum Addresses Issues of State-to-State Quota Transfers*

Washington, DC – The Atlantic coastal states of Massachusetts, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia have scheduled the dates and times of their public meetings in order to gather public comment and input on the recently released draft Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Horseshoe Crab. Following are the details of the scheduled meetings.

**March 26, 2001; 7:00 PM**

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy  
101 Academy Drive  
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts  
Contact: Jim Fair at (617) 626-1534

**March 27, 2001; 2:00 PM**

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries  
Katherine Cornell Theatre  
51 Spring Street  
Tisbury, Massachusetts  
Contact: Jim Fair at (617) 626-1534

**March 29, 2001; 7:00 PM**

Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Fisheries Service  
Wicomico Public Library  
122 Division Street, Room 4  
Salisbury, Maryland  
Contact: Tom O'Connell at (410) 260-8271

**March 26, 2001; 7:00 PM**

Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
Fourth Floor Conference Room  
2600 Washington Avenue  
Newport News, Virginia  
Contact: Jack Travelstead at (757) 247-2247

**March 27, 2001; 7:30 PM**

Delaware Department of Natural Resources and  
Environmental Control  
Secretary's Conference Room  
89 Kings Highway  
Dover, Delaware  
Contact: Charlie Lesser at (302) 739-3441

**March 29, 2001; 6:30 - 9:30 PM**

New Jersey Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife  
Ocean County Administration Building  
101 Hooper Avenue  
Toms River, New Jersey  
Contact: Bruce Freeman at (609) 292-2083

The purpose of Addendum II is to provide for the voluntary transfer of harvest quotas between states to alleviate bait shortages on a biologically responsible basis. The Draft Addendum II identifies a series of management options and procedures for reviewing and approving state-to-state quota transfers.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

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There are currently no provisions under the FMP for quota transfers. Consideration of quota transfers is complicated by recent findings that the horseshoe crab population along the East Coast of the United States may be comprised of more than one discrete population (stock). Transferring quota from a region with a large horseshoe crab population to a region with a small population could threaten the smaller stock. It is for this reason that quota transfers should occur within a population and must be predicated on a stock delineation and estimates of stock size. Quota transfers should also be evaluated for their impact on competing uses, especially shorebird populations and the biomedical industry.

Migratory shorebird populations in the Mid-Atlantic region are present due to a superabundance of horseshoe crab eggs. This superabundance of eggs may require a surplus of horseshoe crabs beyond what is necessary to sustain the horseshoe crab population within that region. Further, the use of horseshoe crabs by the biomedical industry to manufacture Limulus Amoebocyte Lysate (LAL) should be considered. LAL is the current worldwide standard for testing drugs and other pharmaceuticals for bacterial endotoxins. The Draft Addendum includes procedures for Technical Committee and Management Board to review and approve quota transfers on a case-by-case basis. It is proposed that each request for quota transfer be evaluated based on the amount of each quota transfer, stock delineation, and the impacts of the quota transfer on the horseshoe crab population, migratory shorebirds, and the biomedical industry.

The framework for managing horseshoe crabs along the Atlantic coast was approved in October 1998 with the adoption of the Interstate Horseshoe Crab FMP. This FMP required the States of Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey to maintain their current horseshoe crab harvest reduction strategies, and required all states to implement certain horseshoe crab research and monitoring programs in an effort to facilitate future management decisions. In February 2000, the Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum I to the FMP. Addendum I established a state-by-state cap on horseshoe crab bait landings at 25 percent below the reference period landings beginning in 2000, and established *de minimis* criteria for those states with a limited horseshoe crab fishery. Those states with more restrictive harvest levels (Maryland and New Jersey) are encouraged to maintain those restrictions to provide further protection to the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab population, recognizing its importance to migratory shorebirds.

Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400, or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org> under the Public Input page. The public comment period extends until April 13, 2001. Written comments should be forwarded to Tom O'Connell, Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Service, Tawes State Office Building, C-2, 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland, 21401; or via email at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org). For more information, please contact Tom O'Connell, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (410) 260-8271 or [toconnell@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:toconnell@dnr.state.md.us).

NOTE TO PRESS: If you would like to receive the Commission's press releases via email, please contact Tina Berger, Public Affairs & Resource Specialist, at [tberger@asmfc.org](mailto:tberger@asmfc.org) or fax to (202) 289-6051.